

# HOW TO LEARN & MEMORIZE GERMAN VOCABULARY



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# Why You Need To Read This Book

Every day for six months I sat in German class and silently uttered streams of English swear words that would have reddened my teacher's cheeks.

My frustration carried on until I devised the Memory Palace system taught in this book, the same technique that helped me advance from groveling through a small patch of vocabulary to soaring above the clouds of German diction.

Within hours of finally figuring out this system, my storage and recall of German vocabulary increased by a factor of ten. Within a month of working with the system, I had learned and memorized the sound and meaning of 260 new words. And within three months I was reading complex literature that had previously sent me running to the dictionary more than 100 times per page.

I also began engaging in sophisticated conversations that went far, far beyond asking for directions and ordering beer. I talked with people about Art History, philosophy and other subjects that are dear to me. Within a year I found myself giving public lectures in Germany to native Germans who could understand me perfectly. I know I was understood because they asked me intelligent questions and I satisfied them easily and naturally with the multi-layered nuances of my answers.

As my fellow students at the Hartnackschule Language School in Berlin watched this progress, they flocked to me for advice during breaks and after class, attracted to the methodical ways I turned my "guerilla" memory tactics into near-fluency. One student hired me to accelerate his language learning and this established me as a private memorization trainer.

The help I've been able to give people over the years has been wonderful. In less than a week, I regularly have students return to me with a minimum of 260 new words firmly lodged in the alphabetical Memory Palaces taught in this book. These memorization techniques work for me, they work for my students and they will work for you.

This book is for anyone struggling with the complexity of learning and memorizing German vocabulary. It's for language learners who want to strike out on their own or supplement other training materials to read, hear and speak credible German in record time. It's for people overwhelmed with frustration at

their inability to retain the words they learn and access them whenever they like.

You have three obstacles that keep you from learning and memorizing German vocabulary words.

### **1. A Belief That You Don't Need a Strategy to Memorize Words.**

Many people rely on rote learning. They believe that if they repeat the words enough times or write them over and over again, they will eventually retain the vocabulary. Admit it. You're secretly hoping that you'll learn a new word, repeat it a bunch of times and have access to it forever. But that takes time, frustration and it rarely works as well as any of us would like. Don't let the fantasy of rote learning make you give up. You will succeed in your memorization goals to the extent that you learn and implement the proven techniques provided in this book.

### **2. A Belief That Memorization Techniques Won't Work For You**

Every day I hear people say that the memory techniques I teach simply "won't work for me." My response is always a confident "yes they will." Then I show them convincing evidence that anyone and everyone can find success with the memorization techniques I've used to memorize massive amounts of German vocabulary words.

Countless studies, including Richard C. Atkinson's published study of memory techniques used for language learning conducted at Stanford University demonstrate the power of memory techniques over what he calls "cheap memory devices," i.e. the pen and paper used by millions of language learners around the world. This ancient habit of writing out the same word over and over again may help break writer's block, but it does little to promote learning foreign language vocabulary.

Atkinson concluded that memorization techniques should be included in the curriculum of all language-learning classes. Language learners make incredible leaps when using these techniques and the study ends by saying that "poorer learners receive special benefits, particularly if given some coaching along the way." *How to Learn and Memorize German Vocabulary* is your coach-in-a-book.

### **3. A Belief that Using Memorization Techniques are Too Much Work**

My memorization strategies will take you approximately 5 hours to implement, but the effects are immediate once you've understood the principles. I know it

takes 5 hours because I've watched the clock when creating the Memory Palaces needed to effectively learn and memorize the vocabulary of a foreign language without any learning by rote. Because there are only a few things you have to do to truly make a difference in your progress with the German language (or any language that shares an alphabet with English), everything else is a waste of time, especially rote learning. After your Memory Palaces are set up and you understand the principles as they apply to German, you will be able to learn new German vocabulary words in 30 seconds or less.

Before we get started, I would like to make an appeal to you: Believe in your brain. I never used to believe in mine, but now I can speak, read and write German beautifully. It is impossible to tell you in just a few words how powerfully this ability has opened the door of life for me. To understand another culture with the levels of sophistication anyone can achieve with the right strategy has changed my life and will have life long benefits.

And the fact is that when you accelerate your German language skills, you get access to three cultures, not just one: German, Austrian and Swiss. You'll travel to these countries and experience them with greater joy and intensity than you have ever dreamed possible. You'll meet people you never could have approached without a full German vocabulary. If you're a businessperson, you'll seal impressive international deals and acquire contacts both online and off that would have been impossible before. You can read German newspapers, German magazines and understand the lyrics of German music. You can go to the theatre and see German plays and you can enjoy German films without the subtitles. You, like me, can do this. Give me 5 hours and I will give you the ability to learn and memorize all the German vocabulary you could ever desire.

# **How to Learn and Memorize German Vocabulary ...**

... Using a Memory Palace Specifically  
Designed for the German Language  
(and adaptable to many other languages  
too)

[www.memorizegermanvocabulary.com](http://www.memorizegermanvocabulary.com)

Anthony Metivier, PhD

**For language learners and  
memorizers everywhere.**

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**WAIT!**

I have created Worksheets that go along with this book. In order to receive them, go to:

<http://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/free-magnetic-memory-worksheets/>

As a reader of this book, you'll also receive a *complimentary* volume of the prestigious [Magnetic Memory Newsletter](#) and the chance to subscribe to the newsletter – while it's still free . [Subscribe now](#) and get the only information that will keep your memory ***magnetic*** for years to come.

## Introduction

I learned to speak German in Germany. This was after attending a few lessons that took place in a small Manhattan church in New York City. The teacher played old cassettes of a learning program called *Warum Nicht?* which is now freely available on the Deutsche Welle website. (The link for the program is in the resource section at the end of this book.)

The teacher was patient and kind as she had her students parrot the actors, each of us taking turns as we struggled with the words and their meanings.

But I didn't learn much in that tiny church. Nor did I learn as much as I would have liked when I found myself studying the most beautiful language I have ever heard in Berlin.

I had a problem. A serious problem.

Although I had the benefit of living in Berlin while I sat in classes four hours a day for six months, I struggled to remember even the simplest words. Despite being seriously devoted to learning the language, and grasping the grammar reasonably well, I just couldn't get the vocabulary to stick. It was as if I had a giant hole in my head, one that all the new words I learned leaked through like water winding its way around spaghetti in a basket strainer. I tried rote learning, but this only hurt my wrist, and because it is so frustrating to spend all that time writing out the same word hundreds of times, this nearly-futile practice only aggravated the problem. In fact, the only word I remember from my rote learning practice is *allmählich*. Ironically, this word means "gradually."

I looked far and wide for a system designed specifically to allow me to memorize a language during my years of living in Germany. I read every book on memory I could find and took every audio course.

I learned a great deal about memory as a result, but I never found anything substantial regarding how to memorize the *vocabulary* of a different language. I have discovered a few thoughts on memorizing matters of grammar that I discuss in different parts of this book, but never have I found a memory system particularly designed for retaining vocabulary itself.

Not one to be dissuaded, I decided to create my own method of holding and literally "owning" German vocabulary in my mind so that I could recognize the



words when I read or heard them and easily access each when it came time to speak. I wanted a comprehensive system that would always be there for me, one that could be built in simple stages and accessed just as simply. I did not fantasize that such a system would be easy to create, but I did believe that once installed, I would be able to navigate it without hassle and even enjoy the process.

And now I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my system with you. Not only will you learn a remarkable method for learning German using a 26-letter memory palace system in this book, but you'll also learn all the steps I took in finally arriving at this unique approach. I want to take you on this adventure with me because I believe that my journey towards memory mastery will help you understand the process much better than if I cut to the chase, or *auf den Punkt kommen*, as the Germans say. I also want you to have plenty of extra techniques to implement in addition to acquiring German, or indeed any other language that shares an alphabet with English. With a little imagination, you will be able to extend these principles to languages that use other alphabets as well: Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Hebrew ... the possibilities are endless.

Most people have heard of memory stunts. They've seen someone reciting a series of dates or phone numbers on television, or perhaps they've read a book by Harry Lorayne. For some people it's difficult to imagine why these techniques would be useful for memorizing anything. For other people, it's too much work. Yet other people have told me that the time-honored techniques for memorization simply don't work for them.

The techniques taught in this book are not stunts. They are skills. As part of the ancient art of memory (*Ars Memorativa*), these time-honored practices and the abilities they create have nothing to do with so-called "photographic memory" or any kind of innate talent. By participating in the improvement of your memory for whatever purpose, you are joining a league of special people who have decided to take control of their minds and make it work for them, instead of against them. Instead of accepting that they have a bad memory, they seize nature by the tail, flatten the earth and lay the foundations for a new way of memorizing anything they want.

An important thing to realize before we get started is that learning a language like German is not only useful given the importance of German in the modern world: but it's fun to do and the benefits go far beyond merely acquiring the

language. Using the memory techniques taught in this book is also a form of mental exercise that will send oxygen-rich blood to your brain. But instead of hauling yourself to the gym to build the muscles in your arms and legs, the maintenance of the memory techniques I'm about to share with you can be done entirely in your head. This means that you can work on them anywhere you go and at any time.

I often encounter people who say that memorization techniques don't work for them. I don't accept this attitude, especially since I myself used to share it. I was convinced that I had a poor memory and even once blamed the techniques discussed in this book for making my memory worse! The fact of the matter is that when used correctly, memory techniques cannot help but create durable memories that you can draw upon at will.

So when I meet someone who expresses a negative attitude about their memory abilities or memory techniques in general, I always have one question: Can you ride a bike? The answer is always yes. Well, not always. Only one person I've met has ever said that she could not – at least not very well.

“Like a Ten-Speed bike, most of us have gears we do not use.”

Charles Schultz

The reason I use the bicycle metaphor is that memory skills are similar to bicycles in the sense that virtually everyone can use them. People simply have to explore the system and suit its key principles to their own purposes. Just as we would adjust the handlebars or raise and lower the seat of a bicycle to fit the height and shape of our bodies, we need to tweak the central memory techniques discussed in this book until they fit suit our needs. After that, the race is on!

All of that said, I'm going to share with you several of my memory techniques, many of which are based on ancient, universal principles that I have learned from memory masters like Harry Lorayne, Dominic O'Brian and the magician Juan Tamariz. My hope is that you will see the bicycle frame and tires lurking beneath these techniques and adjust them in a way that suits your own needs.

As for the technique used to learn German, there is nothing like it out there.

And make no mistake: Although we only start to approach how to memorize German specifically in the final chapters, don't skip over the other parts of this

book. They will train you in the basics and ensure your success. They'll also give you countless valuable ideas about how to adjust the techniques for your own purposes based on how I adjusted them for mine.

Although I have discussed these memory techniques in a conversational manner, you'll find at the end of each chapter a set of action steps that will give you some guidelines on how to proceed immediately with each and every step. The final chapters also give you examples of the 26-letter palace so you can see how I use my system in detail.

I won't wish you luck on your journey towards memorizing all the German vocabulary you could ever desire. I wrote this book so that luck is the last thing you'll need to store and retrieve this wonderful language and any other material you would like to remember.

## Chapter 1: The Main Principles

The overarching principles that we need to understand in order to amplify our memories involve three steps: **location**, **imagery** and **activity**. A subgroup of steps includes what I call Preparation and Predetermination. Let's look at each of these in the order that I've mentioned them. But keep in mind that all three are important and are ultimately interrelated. If you are interested in the history of memory techniques, I highly recommend reading this webpage:

<http://www.mundi.net/cartography/Palace/> as well as the three memory masters I have mentioned above. Joshua Foer's recent book, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* will also teach you a great deal, but please be advised that it is as just as much a cultural history as it is a nuts-and-bolts guide.

### ***Location***

You have probably heard of memory palaces. It is the idea that memories can be stored in mental buildings that have many corridors and rooms. This may or may not be an effective way of approaching the concept for you. As I'll discuss in the application section, I use a combination of indoors and outdoors settings, and more intricately, there are sometimes doors inside of my palaces that lead outdoors and vice versa. Normally, however, I use the actual locations of places I know well without embellishing them.

And that is the fundamental principle of using locations in your memory work. Use places you know. I once calculated that I have lived in 8 different cities and at least 25 different homes in 16 neighborhoods within those cities. That is a lot of territory, much of which can be used for storing memories. The idea is that we all already have a huge amount of material memorized, and memorized in a very intimate way. This territory can be used to place memories in a sequential order that will never be confused precisely because we know the territory so well. But in order for those memories to stick, they need to be big, colorful and characterized by activity.

## ***Imagery***

Imagery is just what it sounds like, but the images need to be big and they need to be colorful. I should say, however, that you may find black-and-white to be very interesting, so by all means, play with that dynamic. I have to admit that as a conceptual person, the imagery I use isn't particularly colorful at all.

What about you? What if you're not a visual person? As I've just admitted, I'm not a tremendously visual person myself. For some people this hard to believe because I worked in the past as a Film Studies professor for several years. I talk more about theory and concepts than anything visual and have been blessed to have the opportunities to do so. Ask me about how a particular shot gets framed and I quickly get lost.

Back to memory techniques: when I started using memory techniques, I allowed this image-dull mind-quirk that came with my brain to be a barrier to my forward progress.

Don't fall prey to this! If your imagination lacks strong imagery or the ability to produce colorful and exaggerated objects, I have a suggestion that may work for you. It has certainly worked for me when I've been at a loss for colors and oddities.

The suggestion is this: use famous actors that you are very familiar with. I'll show you in the application section how that I have made this technique work very well for myself when it comes to memorizing German vocabulary, much of which has particular features that you can easily make use of with respect to famous people. *Ab-* words get linked to Abraham Lincoln, *Ein-* words to Einstein and *Zer-* words to Zorro and so forth. You'll see how all that words soon, I promise.

Here's another approach for those lacking imagination. I know that's a terrible way of putting it, but let's face it, we exist! It's called *Imagination Deficit Disorder* or IDD.

You could use famous paintings. The more familiar you are with their intricacies, the better.

There is a problem with paintings, however. They tend to be static. But if you

can imagine the Mona Lisa doing unusual things outside of her frame, or Michelangelo's David in more than just one posture, then you will find yourself with unlimited possibilities.

You could also use action figures, Barbies, My Little Pony dolls, cars, trucks ... whatever you like. The important factor here is that the figures or images that you select can be put into action with ease. Again, I'll talk about how famous figures helped me remember hundreds of German words and you'll quickly see how you can do this too.

### **Activity**

At this point, you've picked a location with many sub-locations and you've picked an image that is visually interesting to you. Now it's time to give that image a bit of movement.

It may not be pleasant to think in this way, but the fact of the matter is that if you really want to remember something, it's best if the image is violent. If you've ever seen a highway accident take place and couldn't shake the image from your mind even years later, you know the power of violent action.

But I'm not necessarily suggesting that the violent imagery has to cost lives. You can use cartoon imagery, or use violence in a humorous way. Wile E. Coyote beat himself up in some pretty savage and yet hilarious ways when trying to capture the Road Runner for dinner, to take one famous example.

The point here is to create something so memorable that you don't have to work hard whatsoever to remember it. If the movement in the image is memorable, the colors and shapes are vivid and the location is already pre-remembered, then you are much more likely to remember your target word.

Don't worry about all this imagery, by the way. You're probably thinking that this technique is going to lead to a lot of mental clutter. As you practice, however, the best part about this system is that the mechanisms we use to remember our words ultimately tend to fall away. I often forget exactly how it is that I memorized a German word even though the target memory is still in place. I know that the words *Zerbrechen*, *Zerbrechlich* and *Zerbrechlichkeit* are stored on the escalator going down into the movie theatre at the Sony Center in Berlin, but I cannot for the life of me remember what image I used to place it there. But because all *Zer-* words are associated with Zorro, he's definitely in there

somewhere.

Oh wait! Now I remember the image I used to remember these words. But be patient. We'll get to those soon enough. For now, let's carry on to the next section, which deals with how to prepare and predetermine the locations that we'll need for placing our large, zany and colorful images in the locations and stations of our Memory Palace.

### *Preparation and Predetermination*

For our purposes, preparation means getting the mind relaxed. I talk at length about relaxation in the concluding chapter.

Predetermination simply means charting out the memory locations and stations you will use *before* making the attempt to memorize anything. It cannot be stressed enough that you need to have the architecture in place even before you begin. I've tried making up the palace as I go along and it always harms the results. Spend the time to figure out a series of locations that you want to use and identify stations within them.

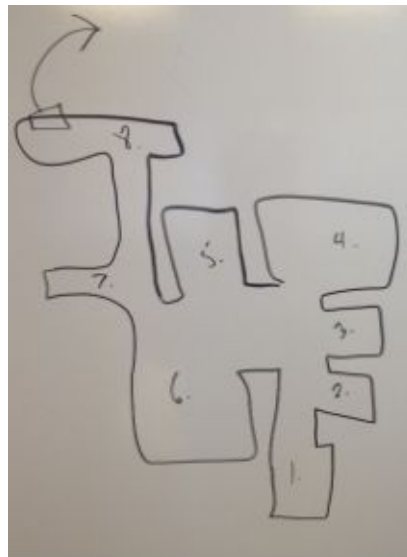
It's important that you don't try to be perfect. Even though you want these elements in place before you begin, you also don't want to crush your forward progress by getting picky. Get yourself relaxed and let your mind naturally bring to you the locations and stations. Again, there are notes on relaxation in the conclusion.

If it helps, you can draw a map of the locations and the stations. You could also jot them down on paper or in a Word file using a linear, text-based top down format. I've done both. In fact, the more mediums you use, the clearer your locations will be in your mind.

When I draw a map of my location, I number the stations and create a list. For instance, the following map describes my first apartment in Berlin. This image is in fact the first Memory Palace I ever created, and you'll notice the amateur nature of it because I only had 8 instead of 10 stations. Nonetheless, this apartment was on the Feurigstraße (Fire Street) in a part of the city called Schöneberg (Pretty Mountain). Here is a list of the stations in this location:

1. My office
2. Laundry Room

3. Bathroom
4. Bedroom
5. Wife's office
6. Living Room
7. Hallway
8. Kitchen



MEMORY MAP OF MY FIRST APARTMENT IN BERLIN WITH 8 STATIONS

The arrow indicates how I imagined my journey would continue outside of the apartment. There are now 50 stations in this memory palace leading all the way down Feurigstraße to Hauptstraße and beyond.

Try this out for yourself and include an Excel file or at least a handwritten list to your memory efforts. These are valuable devices to have for the purposes of testing the quality and reliability of the words you've memorized in your Memory Palace. Practice this well. You'll be creating at least 26 of these.

For now, here are some action steps that will help you with mastering these basics of memory technique:

1. Pick out at least 10 locations that you remember very well. Usually these involve apartments or houses that you've lived in, but you could also choose parks, movie theatres, museums, etc. so long as you have a strong memory of



these places. It helps a great deal to draw maps of the locations you will be using and have some system for labeling the individual stations. Alternatively, students can list them in a Word document or catalog them in an Excel file. You can also easily visit

<http://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/free-magnetic-memory-worksheets/>

for your free [Magnetic Memory Worksheets](#). Take advantage of this offer right now because these worksheets will help you instantly organize your locations and the stations within them. All you have to do is fill in the blanks. You'll also get a free subscription to the Magnetic Memory mailing list, which gives you access to helpful tips about amplifying your memory, inspirational notes, links to valuable videos and other memorization-related materials that will keep your mind magnetic for years to come.

2. Pick out at least 10 “stations” within the location. These stations are the places that you will use to place the words or items or lines of poetry you want to remember. A station can be an entire room or just part of a room. It could be something as specific as the left arm of a particular couch, but beginners are advised to use one room at a time before getting too particular. Later, when you are advanced, you can experiment with inventing locations and stations.

3. Mentally wander through the stations in your location. Make them as vivid as possible in your mind. It's also helpful to imagine that you are cleaning them, removing any dust or dirt that might get in the way of your memory work.

4. Create a map. Drawing the locations will help solidify them in your mind. If you are not a visual person, create a list or make a spreadsheet in your computer. As you'll see in the final chapter, a spreadsheet is a very good method for creating the 26 palaces you'll need for memorizing German vocabulary.

5. Practice with some trivial things you want to remember that are of no great consequence. You could use a shopping list, for instance. Now is the time to begin making things large and colorful.

6. Add action. If you are trying to remember that you need milk and you place the milk in the living room, imagine yourself jumping up and down on the milk. Use whatever comes to mind, so long as it is zany and memorable. Usually your mind will come up with something, often on the first try.

7. Relax when you are practicing. There are some notes on relaxation at the end of this book.

8. Have fun. By starting out with items that have very little consequence, you can simply toy around with the concept. But please maintain this spirit of fun when you begin memorizing German vocabulary. It's okay to make mistakes so long as you pay attention to the mistakes you are making and take measures to guide yourself back to the general principles.

9. Test yourself. The most obvious way of testing yourself is to have written down what you wanted to remember so that you can double check. This is fine, so long as you don't make the mistake of then turning this into a method of memorizing by rote. There are some more tips near the end to help ensure that you don't do this, but for now, you can test by writing down what you wanted to memorize away from the key you created and only later comparing the two lists.

10. Teach someone else the techniques you have been practicing. Discuss your work with memory as much as possible. This is a very important part of the process. The more you discuss memory, the more you will learn about it. The more you learn about it, the more you will proceed. Make working on your memory a habit for life.

## **Chapter 2: Some Important Exercises on Your Journey to Memorizing German Vocabulary**

In this section I will describe to you how that I have modified the larger principles described in the previous chapter to my own purposes as part of reaching my goal of easily memorizing the German language.

In other words, in this chapter and the next, I'll tell you how I raised the seat, adjusted the handlebars and polished the chrome in order to be sure the bicycle of memory techniques suited my needs perfectly. I will also discuss four ways that I use memory on a daily basis and give you examples of each.

Although you may not use your memory to retain poetry, the order of a deck of cards or the number of your car and seat on a train in Germany, my hope is that you'll follow my descriptions of how I put these larger principles into action and see how to apply them in your own way.

Please don't skip this section. There are many important clues and ideas that you can use on your own journey towards memorizing German vocabulary. These exercises were essential to me and they will be essential to you.

### ***Poetry and Novels***

I know that we're not here to learn memory tricks, but there is little that impresses people more than the ability to whip out a heap of Shakespeare off the top of your head. I'm not talking about "To be or not to be." I'm talking about the entire soliloquy.

Poetry can be difficult to remember, especially if it is unrhymed or has an unusual rhyme structure. Take John Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, for example. I love the second stanza:

O for a draught of vintage! That hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth  
Tasting of Flora and the country green.  
Dance, Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South!  
Full of the true, the blushing Hippocrene

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim  
And purple-stained mouth  
That I might drink and leave the world unseen  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim

Good stuff, no?

Now, how did I memorize it? Well, as discussed in the previous chapter I started by picking a location. As it happens, I had first encountered this poem in a classroom in Wintors College at York University where I took some of my four degrees.

I remember the room where I studied the poem and the entire building very well. So that's where I started. Remember: we use places that we know precisely because we don't have to remember them. If I know where the door is in relation to the desk where I sat, then there is no need to remember that the desk is station one and the door is station too. It just happens naturally.

So let's begin. Here is how I memorized this delightful, if sad stanza from one of Keats' most heartfelt poems.

*O for a draught of vintage!*

I imagined myself as large and as vibrantly as possible squeezed into the tiny desk I sat in when class was in session. I saw myself drawing the word "vintage" using dark black pencil. The pencil is enormous and digs deeply into the surface of the desk like a knife. To get more action into the scene, I imagined myself working feverishly, like a mad draftsman trying to express some unspeakable secret.

*That hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth*

By the door leading out of the classroom, I pictured a fridge, and there I saw myself digging earth out of it with a shovel. I stabbed the earth deeply with the shovel and tossed the dirt into the hall.

*Tasting of Flora and the country green.*

Outside in the hall, I saw myself painting the concrete wall with flowers and a green countryside. This time I was a mad painter and this time, to remember the line, I visualized myself tasting the paint.

*Dance, Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!*

By the door of the next classroom down the hall, I saw myself dancing, and then kicking Ezra Pound through the bars of a prison. For reasons I won't get into, Pound is readily associated with Provencal songs by people who majored in English. Pound also went through a period in his life where he was caged beneath the sun, and according to legend he laughed at the guards a lot. So I saw him laughing at me as I kicked him, his face badly burnt by the sun.

*O for a beaker full of the warm South!*

For this one I had to bent the rules of reality. There is a third classroom in Winters College on that floor, and I simply imagined that it was a scientific laboratory. Inside, I imagined a mad scientist violently cracking an egg-shaped compass pointing south into a bubbling beaker. The smoke and boiling bubbles helped me remember that the South Keats speaks of is warm.

*Full of the true, the blushing Hippocrene*

For this image, I moved into the staircase at the end of the corridor. I imagined a blushing Hippopotamus with his mouth full of college degrees, his belly stuffed to the brim with them.

*With beaded bubbles winking at the brim*

This one was easy. In the basement of Winters College is a pub run for and by students. I just saw myself trying to bead the brim of a wine glass with a needle and some thread. And of course, everything was huge, vibrant and visualized with over-the-top action. For example, I wasn't just "trying" to push a needle into the glass, but stabbing at it frantically. The imagery is kind of disturbing, but that's exactly the point. That's what makes it memorable.

*That I might drink and leave the world unseen*

Brace yourself for more grotesque violence. To remember this, I saw myself drinking from the glass and then stabbing myself in the eyes with the needle.

*And with thee fade away into the forest dim*

The patio outside the pub isn't exactly like a forest, but I still used it. I populated it with trees, made it dark, and envisioned myself being guided into the forest as the entire picture dimmed out, like the ending of a film.

In truth, memorizing the passage was not a great deal of work, partly because I love the poetry. Being able to pay attention to the subtleties of the language and Keats' particular spin on the world not only helps, but creates a sense of urgency for me. I not only want to know Keats better, but I *need* to know his poetry better. This is what I tell myself. I manufacture excitement when I don't feel it naturally. Paradoxically, I combine this sense of excitement with deep relaxation when working. This combination of excitement and relaxation helps came easily to me because I just relaxed and let them come to me. In about half an hour, I was able to recite the passage with ease.

When it comes to novels, the procedure is more or less the same. But instead of memorizing individual lines, I remember important plot points and the names of characters. Character names don't necessarily have to be remembered because the novelist will use them over and over again and in many cases we'll come to identify with the characters and remember their names naturally and without any external effort.

It helps too if you understand the shapes novels tend to take. Usually there is some kind of problem or dilemma experienced by a character who is faced by something that has happened in his or her past. The dilemma then turns into a crisis that must be dealt with, followed by a strong decision and a series of actions leading to a battle or confrontation with the antagonist. There may be a moment of self-revelation during the battle that helps the character defeat the antagonist, followed by the resolution. Obviously, not every story has this exact shape, but thinking in terms of story shape can certainly help as you work on memorizing the elements of the plot.

The important thing to keep in mind is the kind of space you use. If you are memorizing 8-10 lines of poetry, then it's possible that a single room or a small apartment with several rooms will do. I usually prefer to use one room or location for this kind of work, but if you are able to compress things in your memory palace, you could imagine a bookshelf in a room you are familiar with and use each individual book as either a portal to another memory palace or as

an individual signifier of what you want to remember. It's all up to you.

But when it comes to remembering the key events of a novel, make sure that you have a big enough place so that you don't run out of stations. I wouldn't want to use Winters College to remember Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, for instance, but for something like that, Broadway in Manhattan would probably do. It's a long walk from 187 where I used to live down to the southern most tip of Broadway, but I've done it, the streets are numbered and you can easily follow it in a sequence that's hard to miss.

If you are a film reviewer, or just want to memorize the plot points of the films you see, it may take some practice to get fast enough to create vibrant, memorable and active images and store them in unique locations in real-time, but it can be done. You can also take notes and then memorize these later when you can relax.

On that note, I must say it again: one of the key points in all of memory practice that no other memory book I've read mentions is that you need to make sure that you are relaxed. If you are feeling tense or running away from a mugger (which you might be on the stretch of Broadway that runs through Manhattan), these techniques probably won't have the desired effect.

I mention this mugging example for a reason. I was once the victim of an attempted mugging on Broadway in Harlem. I know the area quite well, but I cannot use it as part of any Memory Palace because of that experience. My heart always quickens when I think of that gun pointed at me. This touch of anxiety interferes with the memorization process immensely. Keep this point in mind when building your memory palaces.

Here are some action steps that you can take immediately to start practicing the memorization of poetry:

- 1) Pick a poem you actually enjoy. Although it is certainly possible to memorize material you could care less about, obviously for the purposes of practice, you want to enjoy "owning" the material in your head.
- 2) As always, make sure that you plan out in advance where you are going to store the material. Make sure that you are familiar with the locations and that you've "cleaned" them out. If you've used the

location before, you might run into some trouble if memories from the past are still lurking there.

- 3) Work on your memory only when you are relaxed.
- 4) Avoid falling back on rote memory attempts. They can sneak up so easily, but are not the point of the exercise. Use the techniques of location, imagery and action.
- 5) Test yourself, but in a way that doesn't involve rote learning. If you make a mistake, go back and examine the imagery you've chosen. Is it strong enough? What might you need to add in order to make it stronger?
- 6) Talk to someone about the efforts you are making. This is one of the best ways to solidify your results. If you can, teach them how to do what you are doing. Teaching is not only personally edifying, but it helps to make the world a better place. And remember, the more you can remember, the more you can remember.
- 7) Avoid using places where stressful memories might interfere with the memorization process.



## **Time Out! An Important Note on Memory Retention, Compounding and Generating Excitement for German Vocabulary**

If you find yourself needing to learn German for a job and aren't particularly excited by the language, remember the approach taught in this chapter. You can pretend to be interested in the language and have the same effect you would if you really were keen about learning it. This may take some practice, but you'll find your way into it.

Speed-readers like Mike Koenig have suggested that we pretend we need to interview the author of a book the next day on live television in front of millions of viewers in order to create that urgency to get the key points of the book quickly and accurately. This is an excellent idea that you might adopt that concept to learning the German language too. When I have had to give an important speech or knew I would need particular vocabulary I had only recently learned, I have created urgency and excitement for myself by pretending I was the one being interviewed. This gave me extra snap when working with these memory skills and prompted even better images. It's amazing what adding a pair of spurs to your memory boots can achieve.

I'd also like to offer you a note about retention. No matter how vibrant your images and no matter how solid your final ability to recite what you've memorized, chances are that without repetition, your ability to perfectly recall the words will fade over time. In order to keep things fresh when I want to be able to whip out a poem at any moment, I have to be sure to repeat it to myself at least once a month. I also check the lines I've memorized against the original text from time to time to be certain that I've got the word order correct and haven't missed anything. I perform this "quality control" by writing down what I've remembered during the memorization process and then checking what I've retained against the original text. But I do this only once a month. To constantly look back and forth puts me in danger of learning by rote, and that would defeat the purpose of using memory skills.

You'll want to perform quality control with your newly learned German vocabulary too. I'll say more about scheduling monthly maintenance sessions in

a future chapter.

I also want to use this time out to talk about compounding. When you do your monthly maintenance of a poem or anything you've memorized, you will often note cracks or weaknesses in your system depending on the strength of the original images you used.

If this happens, don't panic or allow yourself to get frustrated. Simply compound the ineffective image. I don't necessarily recommend replacing it with something new, but this certainly is an option. Usually I let the original image stay, but enhance it somehow. If you were using a police officer in a clown suit hitting himself over the head with a hammer, then you may need to add a dog chewing on his ankle. Or you may need to make him hitting himself over the head with the dog itself!

The point is that you do not need to accept weaknesses in your system. You can always find a way to compound the images in your palace.

On that note, you may need to compound the palace itself. Sometimes we think we can use a particular room or hallway in an old home or school that we are using, but later find that our memory of the place is rather too murky. There is nothing that speaks against rebuilding a portion of the memory palace. If you've been keeping your locations and stations organized with drawings, lists and Excel files, then reconfiguring them will not be incredibly difficult.

Depending on your enthusiasm for using Memory Palaces, you may need to compound your locations, stations and imageries frequently, or not at all. Either way, "renovating" will always help compound the memories you have stored.

That said, having to rework the palace itself is less than ideal, which is one reason why I urge you to revisit the section on Preparation and Predetermination before getting started. It will prevent troubles later. However, if you ever do encounter leaks in the pipes or cracks in the walls, you now know that hope is never lost. All you need to do is find the weaknesses in the system and repair them.

## **Chapter 3: Some Important Exercises on Your Journey to Memorizing German Vocabulary Part II**

Warning: The exercises in this chapter may seem unusual. Yet, I've included them because I feel that all of this information is essential to your travels on the path to memorizing German vocabulary.

What could be so unusual, you ask? Imagine the following scenario.

You're seated with some friends in a restaurant. You have 52 individual objects on the table. They're quite small and easily stored in your pocket. These objects can be assembled and reassembled at will. Each object has a unique set of images on the front and look virtually identical on the back. In fact, you have to turn each one over to spot the difference between one object and another.

You have the objects out on the table because your friends have been asking you exactly how you've come to have such a powerful memory. Because you know that one of the best ways to master something is to teach it to someone else, you've decided to teach them the skills you learned in this book.

But first you want to give them a demonstration.

Imagine that you ask one of your friends to reorder the objects. They can spend as much time as they like.

Once they're done, they hand the objects to you. You turn them over one at a time, look at the fronts and then turn them back over, hiding their unique features from your line of sight for the rest of the demonstration.

When you've gotten through all 52 objects, you have the objects back to your friend. To create a bit of time delay, you recite the alphabet backwards or a new poem you've recently created.

Then, you ask your friend to look at the front of the first object.

You tell him what it is.

You proceed to the next object and then the next and the next until you've correctly named all 52.

Your friends are amazing. You feel wonderful. You are now in a position to teach.

What are these 52 unique objects you've remembered with such tremendous ease?

Yes, you've guessed it: a deck of cards.

Would you like to be able to do what I've just described? Then read on, because the techniques in this chapter involve memorizing a deck of cards. More importantly, this skill is an important step towards finessing your brain for the memorization of German vocabulary.

Admittedly, effectively memorizing a deck of cards is quite complex, at least to get started. However, do the groundwork and you'll find many more applications for the raw tools you'll need to cultivate that are applicable in numerous ways, learning German being just one of them. If nothing else, setting yourself up to be able to memorize a deck of cards quickly and efficiently will give you great exercise in the discipline needed in the Preparation and Determination department.

Think about this chapter in terms of the Karate Kid. Remember the way Mister Miyagi made young Daniel-san wash cars and mop the floor. There seemed to be no purpose in it, certainly not in terms of reaching his goals with karate. Yet, when the time came to actually implement karate skills, blammo, Daniel-san had them all at hand. So please don't underestimate the power of squats and pushups, which is essentially what this chapter is all about.

All that said, let me note that I also wanted to learn how to memorize the order of a randomly shuffled deck for the purposes of doing amazing magic tricks. I wound up gaining a lot more in the process, about memory, about the German language and about myself. Ultimately, there's no direct way to describe how and why this process helped me with the acquisition of German other than to say that I couldn't have figured out the path without taking each and every step of my particular journey. I also learned a lot about what doesn't work for me when it comes to memorizing things during this stage of my memory journey. That is why I am sharing these details with you.

And so: following the technical description of how I learned to memorize a deck of cards, I'll follow up with the example of how I use this system to memorize

the seat number on my train, or anything else I might want to remember that this system can help with.

There are a number of stages in being able to memorize a deck of randomized cards quickly and effectively.

First, we need to learn a method of organizing the cards. We do this by giving each card a number. Since there are 52 cards in the deck, we need to divide them up according to suite and then give each suite a number. I'll explain the rationale behind these numbers in a moment, but for now, let's say that:

Spade = 10

Diamonds = 30

Clubs = 50

Hearts = 80

Now let me explain why we have designated these suites with these numbers. It has to do with a numerical sound system that works like this (believe it or not, remembering this simple list of sounds is really the hardest part of the job – the rest is just a technical application of the list):

1 = ta/da

2 = na

3 = ma

4 = ra

5 = la

6 = cha/ja

7 = ka

8 = fa/va

9 = ba/pa

0 = sa

I know what you must be thinking: these memory people are nuts! Well, there is some truth to that, but let's carry on with developing the technique.

Remember that we said the Spades are assigned the number 10. The reason for this will start to become clear when you look at the following:

Ace of Spades = 11 (Toad)

2 of Spades = 12 (Tin)

3 of Spades = 13 (Dam)

4 of Spades = 14 (Tire)

5 of Spades = 15 (Tail)

6 of Spades = 16 (Dish)

7 of Spades = 17 (Tack)

8 of Spades = 18 (TV)

9 of Spades = 19 (Tape)

10 of Spades = 20 (Nose)

Jack of Spades = 21 (Nut)

Queen of Spades = 22 (Nun)

King of Spades = 23 (Enemy)

Now, we start with the Ace of Spades as the number 11 simply to give the order a nicer sequence. Since the sound for 1 is "ta" or "da," I have made the word Toad as my association for the Ace of Spades. You could come up with whatever word you like based on "ta" or "da" sounds, but I would recommend that you pick something that can be easily imagined and placed into action in some way.

Just to be clear how the sequence works, I'll point out that the 2 of Spades is "Tin" in my system because the sound for 1 is "ta" (or "da") and the sound for 2 is "na." Therefore, 12, which is the 2 of Spades could be "tan," or "dan." Surely there are other options, but "tin" has always worked well for me.

Another tip that you might find useful is to pick words that have some personal meaning if you can. 3 of Spades is "dam" for me, not only because as a card associated with 13 is "dam" a logical word, but it also reminds me of when my father worked on a huge dam-building project. He brought me out there a few times, and to my childlike imagination, it was amazing to see the scope of that project. In fact, I think it would probably seem pretty amazing to anyone of any age. The point here is that the more personal the image is, the more staying power it has.

Now, assuming you have this system in place, let me briefly explain why after the 9 of Spades, we switch from words that start with "t" or "d" to words that start with "n." The reason is that the 9 is represented as the 19<sup>th</sup> card in the sequence, and since 1 is "ta" and 9 is "pa," I have chosen the word "tape." The Jack of Spades, however, is the 20<sup>th</sup> card. Since 2 is a "na" sound and 0 is a "sa" sound, I have selected the word "nose."

Before I give you my personal keywords for the rest of the deck, let me give you a quick example of how I would use this system just using a single suite. Let's say that I want to remember that the 9 of Spades comes on top of the 3 of Spades in a stack I am trying to memorize. I would imagine a giant roll of tape manically wrapping up a huge concrete dam. Later, when I wanted to remember which order the two cards came in, it would simply be a matter of remembering the absurd image of a roll of tape crazily unraveling over the surface of a dam, as if to secure it from cracking apart in an earthquake. In fact, in order to really make it memorable, I might want to add a detail like that. This is called "giving the association a reason." If there is a reason, no matter how absurd, that a roll of tape is wrapping up a large concrete structure, then it can help with remembering it.

Let's carry on to see how I've portioned out the Diamonds using this system. Since the Diamonds fall under the number 30, most of this suite will start with "m" words. But as in every suite, we eventually come to the next group of 10, which means that the 10 of diamonds will start with an 'r' word.

Ace of Diamonds = 31 (Maid)  
2 of Diamonds = 32 (Man)  
3 of Diamonds = 33 (Mime)  
4 of Diamonds = 34 (Mare)  
5 of Diamonds = 35 (Mail)  
6 of Diamonds = 36 (Match)  
7 of Diamonds = 37 (Muck)  
8 of Diamonds = 38 (Movie)  
9 of Diamonds = 39 (Map)  
10 of Diamonds = 40 (Rice)  
Jack of Diamonds = 41 (Rat)  
Queen of Diamonds = 42 (Ran)  
King of Diamonds = 43 (Ram)

#### Clubs:

Ace of Clubs = 51 (Lad)  
2 of Clubs = 52 (Lion)  
3 of Clubs = 53 (Lamb)  
4 of Clubs = 54 (Lyre)  
5 of Clubs = 55 (Lily)  
6 of Clubs = 56 (Leash)  
7 of Clubs = 57 (Lock)  
8 of Clubs = 58 (Leaf)



9 of Clubs = 59 (Leap)  
10 of Clubs = 60 (Cheese)  
Jack of Clubs = 61 (Cheetah)  
Queen of Clubs = 62 (Chain)  
King of Clubs = 63 (Gym)

And finally:

Ace of Hearts = 81 (Fat)  
2 of Hearts = 82 (Fan)  
3 of Hearts = 83 (Foam)  
4 of Hearts = 84 (Fire)  
5 of Hearts = 85 (Foil)  
6 of Hearts = 86 (Fish)  
7 of Hearts = 87 (Fake)  
8 of Hearts = 88 (Fife)  
9 of Hearts = 89 (Viper)  
10 of Hearts = 90 (Bus)  
Jack of Hearts = 91 (Boat)  
Queen of Hearts = 92 (Bone)  
King of Hearts = 93 (Bomb)

These are the words I've come up with for each card using the numerical-sound system, but it's up to you to pick the words and images that work best for you.

Now, let me tell you how I put all of this together. Do you remember how I said

that I sometimes have portals inside of my memory palaces that lead to unusual places? My memorized deck of cards is an example of this.

I have lived in two apartments in the capital of Germany, Berlin. I really liked my office in the first apartment and have used it a lot to memorize many things. In the mental version of that office as I have remembered it, there is a pack of red Bicycle playing cards (I just realized now that it may be from the cards that I got the idea of explaining to people that memory systems are just like bikes!)

But instead of playing cards inside that box, there is a garage. If you've seen Christopher Nolan's second Batman film, *The Dark Knight*, you'll know the kind of space I'm talking about. In that film, Batman's "Batcave" is actually a sophisticated room, open and bright with plenty of room for automobiles.

But I don't have any fancy sports cars or Batmobiles in my garage (inside a card box in an office in an apartment in Berlin). Instead, I have the first four cars I owned as a teenager. I have the cars lined up in order from the first car to the fourth car (which also happened to be the last car I ever owned before turning to transit and rental cars only).

The first car is my blue Volkswagen Beetle. It was lowered to the ground and very special to me. Too bad I wrecked it.

My second car was an orange Volkswagen Beetle. There was nothing particularly special about it, but I miss it even to this day.

My third car was a silver Ford Fiesta. A bizarre choice, but I loved it.

My fourth car was a blue Chevy Malibu.

For the purposes of this Memory Palace, each car has 13 locations, which works nicely because each suite in a deck also has 13 cards.

The locations I use are:

- The front driver's side headlight

- The front passenger's side headlight

- The engine hood

- The windshield

The steering wheel  
The driver seat  
The passenger seat  
The seat behind the driver's seat  
The seat behind the passenger's seat  
The inside of rear window  
The outside of the rear window  
The trunk  
The exhaust pipe

For some people, these stations might be too closely compressed together, but this arrangement works very well for me. In general, I like my stations to be as close together as possible.

The nice thing about each car having 13 locations is that I don't feel like I have to memorize an entire deck. Instead, I only need to remember 13 cards per car. It's ultimately rather arbitrary, but it still has a psychological effect that helps the task seem less daunting.

So, taking thirteen cards, let's see what the first car might look like:

Front driver's side headlight = 3 of Clubs (Lamb)  
Front passenger's side headlight = 8 of Hearts (Fife)  
Engine Hood = 7 of Spades (Tack)  
Windshield = 6 of Spades (Dish)  
The steering wheel = 10 of Spades (Nose)  
The driver seat = Ace of Clubs (Lad)  
The passenger seat = Ace of Diamonds (Maid)

The seat behind the driver's seat = Jack of Spade (Nut)  
The seat behind the passenger's seat = 3 of Diamonds (Mime)  
The inside of rear window = 9 of Clubs (Leap)  
The outside of the rear window = 10 of Diamonds (Cheese)  
The trunk = 5 of Spades (Tail)  
The exhaust pipe – 5 of Clubs (Lily)

Now it's just a matter of using location, imagery and activity to weave these images together. It's actually very easy and fun.

Just imagine a lamb standing in front of the car with a fife in his mouth. In addition to the horrible music the lamb is blaring from where he is not standing in front of the passenger side headlight, tacks are firing rapidly over the hood from the fife and smashing into the dish hovering over the windshield. Pieces of shrapnel from the dish have smashed into the nose on the steering wheel, which belongs to the lad sitting in the driver's seat. He winds up sneezing all over the maid sitting in the passenger's seat and so she steals a handkerchief from Nutty Jack of Spades in the back seat who is hitting on the mime beside him. She tries to leap through the window, but crashes her head against a huge chunk of cheese and just as she is recovering, she finds herself being smashed in the face by the tail of the dog I hate, Lily.

It seems like a lot of work, and it is. But with practice, it gets faster and easier. You'll even begin to find that you don't really need all the "training wheels" I've described as much as you did in the beginning, though they will still always be there to help you and will always remain the basic foundation of how you remember the cards. The best part is that you'll find your concentration sharpening and your attention for detail widening. It's a great mental exercise that you won't regret taking up as a habit.

Plus, it will serve as an excellent part of your goal of being able to effortlessly remember German so that you can learn the language quickly and efficiently.

A few notes on this chapter:

I do not use “ran” as a verb for the Queen of Diamonds. Here I am thinking of the Kurosawa movie *Ran*, which is a samurai adaptation of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. I actually don’t picture a woman here, but the old man as he is seen sitting in ceremonial dress at the beginning of the movie.

Lily, the 5 of Clubs is not a flower, but a dog a friend of mine used to have as a pet. I never liked that dog very much, which makes it all the more effective as a memory prompt, ironically.

Leap for the 9 of Clubs is the one spot where I use a verb. I would rather not have, but I couldn’t find any other image that worked for me. “Lap” would be a natural choice, but since laps don’t actually exist, at least not once a person is standing, it just doesn’t work for me.

As a final note to this chapter, I want to tell you a little about what didn’t work for me when it came to memorizing a deck of cards. The great magician Juan Tamirez gives a number of strategies. One is to sing the order of the deck as you want to learn it. Record yourself singing the order and listen to the recording again and again. This approach is perfectly fine, so long as you want to remember a pre-arranged deck that is always pre-arranged in the memorized order. Sometimes, this is my preference, since I am adept at appearing to shuffle a deck without disturbing the order of the cards.

Nonetheless, singing the order never worked for me. It amounts to learning by rote.

Another idea Tamirez gives is to arbitrarily assign both a number and an animal to each and every card. This is getting closer to the system I ultimately landed upon, but it still leads one to use rote memorization in place of a system that lets you remember the order of the cards almost instantly.

Now that I’ve shared with you both what has worked for me and what hasn’t, let me suggest a few ...

Action steps:

- 1) Make the commitment to memorize the sound system for the ten digits, 0 – 9. It’s very easy.
- 2) Apply the number sounds to the different suits in the manner

described.

- 3) Make a word for each card using the number system. Using a written list, Word file or Excel sheet, store the words you create so that you can test your memory of them later.
- 4) Decide in advance where you are going to store the order of the cards you will be memorizing. Use actual locations or invent them. Since you need 52 for this exercise, it is best to think of how you can compress them into a smaller space.
- 5) Make sure that you are relaxed throughout this process. Training yourself to be relaxed while working on memory techniques helps with recall. You want to “anchor” the sensation of relaxation so that you know it very well. You’ll instantly fall into that state of relaxation at any time you want to with dedicated practice.
- 6) Get out a deck of cards, shuffle it, and begin memorizing it.
- 7) Test everything, but always make sure that you are not falling back on rote memory. That is not the purpose of these exercises.
- 8) Describe to someone else the procedures that you are using. You do not need to show off. Simply explain what you are doing and your progress with it. Give a demonstration if you like, but focus on teaching the method whenever possible. Doing so will enhance your skills. Always make sure to demystify these memory techniques as difficult or something to be reserved for nerds or geniuses or people who are otherwise weird. Memory skills are for everyone.

## **Chapter 4: Apply the Tools to German Vocabulary**

If you thought that memorizing a deck of cards is elaborate, wait until you find out what I came up with to help myself memorize German words and phrases. Like everything we’ve discussed so far, we need to set up a system. In this case, we need a system that involves 26 locations, one for each letter of the alphabet.

Bear with me through some points that may seem too obvious. I don’t want to miss any details that may help you on your question to memorize German

vocabulary.

We all know at least 26 locations. The alphabet has 26 letters. Therefore the first thing to do is to figure out what these are going to be. Although you will probably only focus on developing three or four letters at a time, it's best to have them all sorted out in advance so that you pop in new words whenever you want to. Chances are that you will.

The first thing to do is to create a Word or Excel file. Excel works nicely because you can simply list vocabulary words without having to build a table. I have 26 separate files, each one named after a letter of the alphabet. You will then assign a location to each and every letter. Following this, you will assign at least ten stations within each location. Remember: build your journey in such a way that you don't get trapped. You need to be able to mentally wander along the journey in a fluid manner without encountering any obstructions.

In order to avoid being tedious, let me describe how I use just two letters. Let's use A and then Z.

When trying to decide upon a location, it's best to just relax and work with whatever your mind brings you. For whatever reason, my mind wanted to associate all words of a certain subset beginning with the letter A in a house my mom used to live in. Although the home was really very tiny, it was located out in a very rural area and so in addition to the inside of the home, I can vividly remember many locations outside the home and all the way into the small town nearby.

When building your memory palace, it's important to pay attention to the way that German words actually work. Many German words are "trennbar" words, which means that they can be split up.

One example of this is "ab." Countless words begin with "ab." "Abholen," can mean to pick something up. In certain grammatical forms, the "ab" may appear at the end of the sentence. Thus, one can say, "Ich hole mich ab."

It is a good idea to focus on trennbar words because you can do an interesting trick. To my mind, "ab" brings the image of Abraham Lincoln. I'm not a fan of American presidents or history, but for obvious reasons, the association between "ab" and Abraham works.

Taking the dictionary, I found that the first word that starts with “ab” is “abändern.” This means to alter, change or modify. To remember this word, I imagined Abraham Lincoln smashing an urn with a very deadly +. As I saw him smashing the plus sign down on the urn, I mentally sounded out the word: *ab – and – urn*. Simple. Elegant. Fast. Because I had already spent some time working on the German language in a difficult, inelegant and slow way, it came as quite a relief to me when I started applying this system.

Let’s take the next word on the list, “abarbeiten.” This word means either to work something off, like a debt, or to slave away at something. I placed this word in the bathroom. It was as simple as imagining old Abe (or ap as “ab” is pronounced in German) biting down on a letter “n” while growling like a pirate: Aaaaarrrrrh.

The dictionary I was using to learn the “ab” words had about 15 pages with about 20 words per page. That’s a lot of locations! By the time I was done, my memory palace had extended all the way to the centre of the nearest city. Of course, I had charted out every possible location in advance using an Excel file. And the fact that I learn the words alphabetically as I proceed from location to location in logically consistent order helps the process of memorization that much more. The point here is that the easier you make the system and the more time you spend on it in advance, the less thought you have to put into it. And the less thought you have to put into the system, the more thought you can put into memorizing the actual words, which is why you’re engaging in this activity in the first place.

Another point about using an Excel or spreadsheet file: As anyone familiar with the software knows, you can easily type out a list of every location running vertically down the left and then make a record of which words you associate with which locations. That way, in case you ever forget, you’ll be able to go back and refresh your memory. Another use of the spreadsheet, however, is to test your memory. If you print out a blank spreadsheet chart and use it to write down what you have remembered in the order you have remembered it, comparing the two will be easy.

Let me turn now to the letter “Z” just to make sure that you’ve got the concept. For this letter, I used Berlin and for the purpose of this example, I’ll talk about “zu” and “zer” words. I couldn’t think of anyone who starts with words that are even remotely like “zu” or “zer,” so I chose the next closest figure that instantly



came to mind: Zorro. I started him out at the Canadian Embassy, which is located in a part of the city that I often visited because not only is the main library located there, but one of the only movie theatres that plays movies in English is in the area.

“Zerbrechen” was the first word I wanted to learn. In my mind, words that start with “Zer” are entirely associated with Zorro. He will be associated with every word that begins with these three letters in the Z memory palace.

“Brecht” is not a normal sound in English, so I couldn’t associate it to a figure whose name is popular in my mother tongue, but I happen to be a big fan of the German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht. Zorro slashing at Brecht’s ever-present cigar makes for a timeless image that I’ll never forget.

From this position, I move from the embassy to the movie theatre, following a path into and out of its many screening rooms, leaving words by the junk food counters, outside the doors of the individual screening rooms, to the left and right of the screen, sitting in the corner seats, up by the projection window and so forth. I literally just walk around placing words in places that my attention would naturally fall upon if I were to really walk through that location. Zerlesen is Zorro reading a book, Zerunten is Zorro picking an item from the bottom of a shelf, Zeroberst from the top of the shelf, etc.

Finally, you are probably wondering about how to incorporate Grammar rules. I am currently working on such a book, but for now, here are some ideas for how to memorize the genders of words.

For a masculine word, associate the word with a boxer. For instance, in German, “rock” is a skirt and it is a masculine noun. I imagine a boxer in a skirt to remember its gender.

All neutral words, or “das” words are associated in my mind with fire. Thus, das T-shirt in my memory palace is always on fire.

Finally, feminine words, like “die Welle,” are associated wherever they appear in my memory palace with a sexy woman in a dress. In this case, since welle means “wave,” there is a woman in a dress on a surfboard.

The possibilities for what you choose to associate with the genders are endless.

This is the method I chose for myself because I find it quick and easy.

However, I once heard the idea of dividing a city into three locations. Each part of the city would be the gathering place for the individual genders. I think the shortcomings of this system are obvious, but I do not think they would fail to work for some.

In sum, here are some action steps you can take immediately to get started memorizing German vocabulary:

1. Make sure that you understand the main principles of location, imagination and action.
2. Spend some time creating individual locations for each and every letter of the alphabet. It can be a bit of a stretch coming up with 26 locations, but if you just relax and let your mind wander. You will find them. Keep in mind that you don't have to have 26 right away. However, if you have them set up in advance, then when you are learning new words, you can simply pop them into place in the palace you've already created.
3. Make sure that you have at least 10 stations within each of the locations and that you can build more. This means making sure that you don't get trapped. Sometimes when we build a route, we are tempted to cross rooms or proceed in a way that leads to a dead end. This is not good because you risk confusing yourself.
4. Create a Word or Excel file that describes your palace for each letter in a linear matter. I find spreadsheets work the best, but feel free to avoid using a computer at all. Remember that the purpose of creating any files at all is to a) help you mentally structure the path you will take in more concrete terms and b) give you a reference point to look back at when testing your progress.
5. Look at the structure of the German words you want to memorize. I recommend doing as I have done when you begin by choosing words that start with "ab" or "zer." You can also pick words that start with "ein" and use Einstein. There are words that start with "zu" that could be housed in a zoo if you happen to be very familiar with one. The point is to use your imagination naturally, but in a way that coincides with the nature of how this particular language works.

6. Be sure to actually rely upon the techniques of location, imagination and action. Many people I mentor tend to fall back on rote learning, repeating the words again and again and again instead of actually allowing the system to do its work. This creates stress in the mind and body, which leads to fear and a failure to progress. Make sure that you spend time with the exercises and concepts listed in the previous chapters. They will help you ease into memorizing a foreign language like German. I would not have been able to accomplish what I've accomplished without having spent significant time with those techniques first.
7. If it is helpful for you, learn the genders of the words you learn right away. As suggested, you can associate masculine words with a boxer, neutral with fire and feminine with a skirt. Use whatever works best for you.
8. Focus on adjectives and verbs in addition to nouns. Adjectives help you condition your meaning and be more specific and verbs bring energy and clarity to your speech. As a general rule, people pay more attention to strong verbs. This is especially true in German.
9. Use a dictionary (see the next chapter for recommendations of a specific kind of dictionary you can use). After deciding in advance the stations in the palace for a particular letter, I like to sit down with the dictionary and start memorizing the words in order. Not every word will interest you, so try to avoid struggling with them. If you skip 2, 3 or even 10 words, this is not necessarily an issue. You will progress much faster if you allow yourself to focus on the words that attract your interest. You can always go back.
10. Avoid trying to incorporate all the meanings. Grasping just one meaning is best. You can always add new meanings later.
11. Watch some German television or movies. There are plenty of shows and clips available on YouTube. The purpose of this is to hear the language and listen specifically for the words you've learned. You'll be astonished by what a great feeling it is to hear something you've learned spoken by an actor and instantly recognize its meaning.

12. On the point of meaning, try to make sure that the images you use tell the story of what the word means. You don't want to have to add too many images to explain the meaning of the words to yourself. That can get confusing. A good example of how the images can tell the meaning is how I've remembered Zerfleischen in my Z memory palace. Remember that in my palace, Zer words always involve Zorro. "Fleish" sounds a lot like flesh, so I have Zorro hacking away at a huge piece of flesh at a particular station in my memory palace. Since zerflieschen means to "gore" somebody or something, I have the piece of flesh somewhat resemble a human body and this is the action Zorro is making. The meaning comes to mind readily. I know this sounds violent and gross, but keep in mind that the more violent and ridiculous the actions are, the more memorable they are. And never, ever fear the initial images your mind brings to you. They are likely to be the most effective.

## **Chapter 5: Creating and Managing Your Memory Palace Key, The 26 Locations and Your Individual Stations**

In order for you to be able to rapidly insert German vocabulary words into your memory palace, you need to create 26 individual locations. Each location should have at least ten stations to begin with and should be designed in such a way that you can extend the stations to between 50 and 100. If you can do more than that, all the better.

This may seem tricky at first, but if you think of all the places you've lived and the places you are familiar with, you'll soon find that you have more than plenty of areas and regions to work with. As discussed in some of the previous chapters, when you get more advanced, you can also start inventing areas in your mind. The absolutely most important part of this entire process is to prepare and predetermine the locations and stations before you place even a single syllable of German anywhere in your mind .

The second most important aspect is that you relax when memorizing the words.

The third most important aspect is that you maintain your palaces and revisit them. This is quite easy to do.

There are either 29, 30 or 31 days in a month. There are only 26 letters of the alphabet. This means that on any given day, you should be revisiting the words in one of your palaces. It's really that simple. By continuing to revisit and compound any images or locations that need renovation, you will be strengthening your memorization of the vocabulary you've learned immensely. You'll be unstoppable.

Because I want to give you the best possible example of how this can work for you, I'm going to describe for you a few of the locations I use for several letters of the alphabet. In order to avoid burdening this book with countless pages to wade through, I've limited myself to only my favorite letters.

I'll also describe for you several of the stations within and what I've done to memorize the words that live there. And they really do live there. Once you start

practicing the art of memory, you'll find that these words become a part of you. You will own these words.

I have included these examples because I want you to see how easy this process of memorization really is, so long as you're willing to do the groundwork.

To gather all of these words for the purposes of testing, I created a Word file called "Memory Palace Key." Then, I created an Excel file for each letter of the alphabet. As ever, I practiced relaxation at each and every step in order to assure minimum resistance and silence the inner critic who likes to get in the way of things.

Realize that when your inner critic arises, it tends to come from fear. I don't know why exactly, but so many of us tend to fear success when it comes to our passions, and this fear leads to sabotage. Relaxation is the key to overcoming this sabotage so please relax yourself every time you want to memorize German.

I also want to let you know that I do most of this work seated on the porch with a special kind of dictionary called a Monolingual Dictionary. Such books are specially designed for people learning German as a Second Language. They have both the words and the definitions in German, but the definitions are in simple enough terms that you can basically understand the meaning without looking at any English whatsoever. Once you have enough words under your belt, I highly recommend that you get such a dictionary. Langenscheidt produces an excellent one called the Langenscheidt Power Wörterbuch Deutsch. Please see the resources section for more information.

So without further adieu, let's begin with ...

## **Chapter 6: Example Memory Palace for the Letter A**

My mom used to live on Brown Road. I'm not sure why my mind selected this location, but as I've expressed, memorization works best when you go with whatever your mind suggests to you. I call this location Brown Road, because although it starts in my mother's house, the entire journey in the memory palace

quickly leaves the house and then winds its way throughout the community in which she lived.

I'll show you just a few of the stations in the Letter A palace/location.

Bathroom: abändern. I see Abraham Lincoln "altering" Anderton's face (Anderton is the hero of the novel/film Minority Report ).

Washing machine: abartig. I see Abraham Lincoln spitting on a piece of art. This I would consider "abnormal" behavior for such a distinguished gentleman.

Stove: abbauen. Here I see Abraham Lincoln bowing down to "excavate" coal from the stove.

Beside stove: abbaubar. Again, I see Abraham Lincoln bowing, but this time in front of a "biodegradable" gymnastics bar.

Sink: abbeitzmittel. Abraham Lincoln is now at the sink biting into a can of "paint remover."

Fridge: abbetteln. Abraham Lincoln is laying on a bed in the fridge, trying to "wheedle out of" having sex with his wife.

Rocking Chair: abbinden. Here Abraham Lincoln is helping cement "set" with his toes in a bucket of cement as he struggles against ropes that are binding him to the rocking chair.

TV: abblitzen. Abraham Lincoln is now "meeting a rebuff" by addressing the television. I have him swearing "abblitzen" at George Bush while lightning strikes shoot from his head.

Couch: abbremsen. Abraham Lincoln is on the couch with a map of Bremen, pretending to "put the brakes on" his car because that's the last place he wants to go.

Piano: abbummeln. Here Abraham Lincoln is "taking time off from work"... only he's become a bum in order to do it.

Back door: abstimmung. Abraham Lincoln is "voting" for himself by making his mark with the stem of a flower.

## **Chapter 7: Example Memory Palace for the Letter B**

For the letter B I use the High School where I attended Grades 8 and 9. The journey starts at the front doors, goes past the office, along the lockers, into shop class, past the gym, outside to the tables where all the kids smoked, across the baseball diamond, etc. This is an example where I did not use a historical figure or actor, but just a simple bumble bee.

Some of the words located here include:

Outside table: bahnbrechend, A bee is balancing a German locomotive on his finger and reporters are there to capture the “groundbreaking” news. The locomotive reminds me of the “bahn” sound which is also used for railways.

South-east outside door: sich balgen, Here two bees are “scuffling” over a pot of honey.

Baseball diamond first plate: bändigen. A bee is on Freud’s couch “repressing” his true feelings.

Dumpster: bandwurmsatz. A bee is discussing “run-on sentences” with a worm in the dumpster.



## Chapter 8: Example Memory Palace for the Letter F

Letter F: I lived for a year on the Feurigstraße in an area (Stadtteil or Bezirk) of Berlin called Schöneberg. In order to avoid ever getting trapped, I have started this palace in the back bedroom of the apartment. Here are just a few samples:

Right side bedside bookshelf: fahndung. Here I see a giant fan on the bookshelf spurting dung in the faces of a search team “searching for someone.”

Main window: fahne haben. Since I know that “haben” means “to have,” I don’t bother about including it in the palace. Instead, I just focus on a drunk vomiting on another fan. Fahne haben means to “have booze on your breath.”

Bedroom doorway: fahrlässig. Here I see a man laying bricks far into the distance, but “neglecting” to do it very well. To cement the meaning in my mind, I have “neglect” on his nameplate.

Bathroom doorway: feseln. For this image I have Captain Kirk drooling all over a phaser. Because the image came to me naturally, I have no problem remembering that the word feseln means drivel (obviously drool and drivel do not mean the same thing, but since Kirk is often speaking drivel, it just clicks in my mind).

I hope these few samples have given you a solid base upon which to build your own palaces.

To recap: preparation and predetermination is key. Start with the basics of memorization and master the central concepts. Then, start building your German memory alphabet by associating a location with each and every letter, making sure that you have at least 10 stations for each location and that you won’t get “trapped” or cross your own path as you journey through each one.

I recommend that you have all 26 palaces sorted out before you begin for the greatest possible effect. The bicycle metaphor suggests that there is no point in adjusting the seat of a bike if it is missing a wheel. However, don’t let my need for completion prevent you from getting started. As long as you have wheels, a frame and some pedals, it is possible to ride without a seat. Just be sure that you

travel slowly enough to pick up the other parts as you go along.

Another reason to have all 26 palaces already in place is because when you hear new words that people say to you or that you hear when watching a movie, you instantly know where to place them if you've taken the discipline to predetermine anything. It's a great feeling to be able to do this. It's recommended to write words down that you learn in this way, however, even if you can't spell them quite right. You want to be able to test your memory later as part of the entire memorization process.

## **Chapter 9: Advanced Guide to Focusing on and Memorizing the Most Important German Words on Your Journey Towards Fluency**

A lot of my students come to me and say: “Great, I’ve learned how to memorize German vocabulary words. Now tell me which ones I should be putting into my palaces.”

This is a very important question. There are some wonderful resources that will teach you about word frequency in German on the web. “Word Frequency” means how often particular words are used. One of the best resources is found on the [German About](#) page.

Such lists are a good place to start when looking for words to build a basic vocabulary. However, I want to offer you what I have personally found to be the most important words to know when it comes to achieving fluency.

But first, let me talk a little bit about what learning and focus are and how to apply them to your Memory Palace building experience. Looked at from one angle, memory and language learning are two different skills. At the same time, how do you learn a language without memorizing its words? Learning is at its most fundamental level, memorizing something, be it a piece of information or a skill.

One of the great barriers to memory work is procrastination. Everybody does it, so there’s no point in feeling bad about it. In fact, feeling bad about procrastination often only makes the problem worse.

Tim Ferris, famous for books like *The 4 Hour Workweek* and *The Four Hour Body*, has talked about he allows himself to procrastinate and even expects it. He suggests that we “budget for human nature instead of trying to conquer it.”

I’m telling you this because in order to build a sufficient amount of German vocabulary, you will need to spend some time, both in setting up your palaces and in filling them with words. I recommend spending at least an hour a day, but caution anyone and everyone from punishing themselves if they miss a day or two.

However, what Ferris is suggesting is that we actually schedule the days that we miss. The idea is to procrastinate on our goals with intention. Give it a try. It actually helps and even inspires one to put in the necessary work when it is known that some guilt-free slacking off is just around the corner.

The next suggestion I have for you when looking for words to memorize is to think about four specific ways of vetting the words you choose.

First, make sure you know what the word means. This sounds obvious, but is clearly an important step because it may not be a word that you need to learn right away. You also want to know whether the word is a noun, verb or adjective. You can also look at the different ways the word might change depending on its grammatical position in a sentence.

Second, think about why you want to know the word. Is it a functional word that you must know, or is it a word that will add flavor to your German. Is it a synonym? If so, what are some of the other words that express the same meaning. Learning synonyms is a great way to advance your vocabulary rapidly. In German, the word for Thesaurus itself has a number of different words that refer to the same thing. Such books can be called der Thesaurus, das Lexikon, das Synonymwörterbuch, der Wortschatz or der Wortvorrat.

Third, think about how the word can be used in a sentence. If you are having difficulty making use of it immediately, then you want to find an example of the word used in a sentence, which is easily enough done using an online dictionary. If you aren't able to use a word, that's fine and it's still well worth memorizing it because when you read German or hear it spoken, you'll recognize it, understand it and be better equipped to think about how it can be used.

Finally, as an impetus to inspire you, think about what you'll be able to do when you can use that word as a result of having memorized it. This is a powerful method. If you know that by understanding that "Noch eins" is a popular way of saying "one more beer please," then you will have the power to order another beer with a feeling of joy and confidence that you would not otherwise have. If you're able to use either der Irrtum or der Fehler to talk about a mistake, you will know that you have some advanced ability with synonyms and can add flavor to how you speak. Moreover, if in using your memory palace to remember that der Fehler can also be used to describe what we in English would call a nitwit or a boob, then you can look forward to using the word to cast

insults at your new German friends. (But please don't do that!) You will be amazed at how differently people will treat you when they hear that you've gone the extra distance with these words.

On the matter of having a reason to study particular words, remember that when you have a stockpile of synonyms, you can express yourself better by running through them while talking. If the first word isn't quite right and the person you're talking to isn't following, then you have other options to get at your point or question.

Here now is a list of words that I have personally found to be the most useful to know in terms of building fluency. I have placed them in alphabetical order so that you can use them in your memory palace building experience if you choose.

Amount: der Betrag is what you would use to talk about the amount of a restaurant bill. Or, to talk about quantity of a given item, you would use die Quantität.

Argument: das Argument. This is easy to remember. But for flavor, you want to actually learn die Auseinandersetzung. Aus = out, einander = other, setzung = settlement or settling. So literally the word means one another out of settlement.

Art = die Kunst. You can use this word in a lot of ways. For instant, the art of love becomes die Kunst des Liebens. Salesmanship is Kunst der Verkaufens. The black arts is schwarze Kunst and decorative art is ornamentale Kunst. There are endless ways to use die Kunst.

Beautiful: schön, wunderschön or bewundernswert. If you want to say that someone or something is ravishingly beautiful, you would say that she or he is bildschön, or pretty like a picture.

Belief: der Glaube or die Meinung. Ich glaube means I believe and meine Meinung means my opinion. If you believe in ghosts, then you have der Geisterglaube. If you believe in immortality, then you hold der Unsterblichkeitsglaube. A belief system is das Glaubenssystem and an erroneous belief is der Trugschluss. But even erroneous beliefs are allowed in German-speaking cultures, and the freedom of belief is called die Glaubensfreiheit.

Cause: die Ursache. It's very important to know how to say that one thing caused another. To make die Ursache or cause a verb, it becomes verursachen. If you are

looking for the cause of failure, you look for die Fehlerursache.

Certain: feststehen or sicher. It's important to be certain about certain things, isn't it? Feststehen means literally to stand fast and sicher becomes sicherlich when you want to say "certainly, I agree," i.e. "Sicherlich, bin ich völlig einverstanden."

Chance: die Gelegenheit. You can say die Chance and many German-speakers do, but die Gelegenheit is spicier. If you're looking for something for your Z palace, you can also use the word der Zufall. To take a chance is to riskieren or wagen, which is like to put up your wage on a bet.

Change: die Veränderung. Change is important because it happens all the time. But if you are talking about change in terms of small coins, you can use die Münze or das Kleingeld. If you are giving a waiter a tip, you give them Trinkgeld.

Clear: Klar. You'll often hear people say "Alles Klar" to express that everything is well. However, if you want to say that the meaning of something is clear, then you want to say that it is deutlich.

Common: üblich. Some other options include the English cognate normal, but you can also use alltäglich, bekannt or gemeinsam. It's best to look these words up and memorize all of them so you can add flavor to your vocabulary.

Comparison: der Vergleich. To be without comparison is unvergleich, by comparison is im Vergleich. Comparison by touch is der Tastvergleich. A comparison chart is die Vergleichstabelle.

Condition: die Bedingung. If you'll do something only on one condition, then you do it unter einer Bedingung.

Connection: die Verbindung. This word is especially important when traveling. You don't want to miss your connecting train!

Copy: die Kopie. A simple English cognate, but also be on the lookout for die Abschrift or the case of a back copy of a magazine, die alte Ausgabe.

Decision: die Entscheidung or der Beschied. A lot of people will ask you what your decision is and you'll need to answer them. If you make an adverse decision, then it will be called a abschlägiger Bescheid.

Desire: Die Lust. If you're just learning German, it can be funny to hear people saying that they have a lust for something to eat, but that's how German works. To long for something, on the other hand, is die Sehnsucht. To wish for something is to have der Wunsch.

Development: die Entwicklung. A developmental cost is die Entwicklungskosten. The development division of a company is die Entwicklungsabteilung.

Different: anders or unterschiedlich. You can also use something like the English word, which is differieren.

Education: die Ausbildung. Education is very important to German-speakers, especially Germans, so be prepared to talk about your Ausbildung.

Example: das Beispiel. To ask someone: "for example?" you can say "zum Beispiel?"

Existence: das Bestehen. If you have an existing debt, you have Bestehen einer Schuld.

Experience: die Erfahrung. If you want hands-on experience, look for praktische Erfahrung. To get some international experience, which I suspect many readers of this book are looking for, you want die Ausländersfahrung.

Fact: der Fakt or die Tatsache. An established fact is a feststehende Tatsache. Somewhat related here is der Tatort, which is the scene of a crime. Tatort is a famous German television crime scene series that has been on for decades. But I don't think the Germans have the equivalent of our saying: "Just the facts, ma'am."

Fear: die Angst. My personal favorite saying is "Wir atmen tief ohne Angst." It means, we breathe deeply without fear.

Feeling: das Gefühl. To have feelings for nature or experience a natural feeling is das Naturgefühl. You'll hear and read that phrase a lot in advertising.

Fiction: die Fiktion, but also die Dichtung or die Erdichtung. Crime Fiction from the Tatort series if it were to appear in a book would belong to die Kriminalliteratur or die Kriminalromane.

Force: die Macht. There are a lot of words for force, actually. Die Stärke, der Druck and der Einfluss are all worth placing in your palaces.

Form: die Form. Simple, but important to know that it is a cognate.

Free: frei. But that is to be free from something. If it is free from charge it is either gratis or kostenlos. But is anything ever really free?

General: allgemeines. In general is im Allgemeinen, which is to say “in all meanings.” General acceptance is allgemeine Annahme.

Government: die Regierung. You’ll hear this term a lot, especially if you’re an Auslander (immigrant).

History: die Geschichte. For background, der Hintergrund is better.

Important: wichtig. An important point is a wichtiger Punkt. An important reason is a wichtiger Grund. An important starting point, such as setting up a memory palace when learning a new language is a wichtige Ausgangsstellung.

Knowledge: die Kenntnis or das Wissen or der Wissenstand. A knowledge base is die Wissensbasis and a field of knowledge is die Wissensgebiet. If you are missing some knowledge, then you have die Wissenslücke.

Law: das Gesetz or das Recht. An applicable law is a anwendbares Recht.

Material: das Material or der Stoff. A material collection is die Stoffsammlung.

Mind: der Geist. But to have something in mind is to have something im Auge. If you want to play mindgames with someone, you will play das Psychospiel (not recommended).

Motion: die Bewegung. Watch out for those motion detectors or der Bewegungsmelder.

Necessary: nötig or notwendig. Nötigenfalls is what you would use if something is necessary. “Falls” is often used to talk about the “in case of something.” Falls du nicht kommen can means “in case you cannot come.”

Observation: die Beobachtung or die Beachtung. An observation point is der Beobachtungspunkt.

Opposite: das Gegenteil. Der Gegensatz is also quite common. “Gegen” means



against.

Pleasure: die Vergnügen. A pleasure boat is der Ausflugsdampfer and a pleasure trip is die Vergnügungsreise.

Possible: möglich. If possible is “falls möglich.”

Probably: wahrscheinlich or vermutlich. “Wahr” means true or truth and “schein” means to seem, so it seems true.

Purpose: die Absicht or der Zweck. To do something on purpose is mit Absicht, but for the purpose of something is für den Zweck or zum Zwecke.

Quality: die Qualität. If you belong to a quality assurance program, you belong to das Qualitätssicherungsprogramm.

Question: die Frage. If something is beyond question, it is außer Frage.

Reason: der Grund or der Anlass. If you want to ask “for what reason?” you ask “Aus welchem Grund?”

Relation: die Relation or die Beziehung.

Representative: bezeichnend can be used, but if you’re talking about a typical example that is representative of something, you are talking about a typisches Beispiel.

Responsible: verantwortlich. Someone who has an important position has a verantwortungsvolle Stelle.

Science: die Wissenschaft. But if you are looking for a German-language Science Fiction, look for a Zukunftsroman.

Simple: einfach. If your interest in German is simple, then it is an einfacher Zins. Use your memory palaces to store and retrieve words and it really will be simple.

Society: die Gesellschaft.

Substance: die Substanz or der Inhalt. Inhalt is also used to talk about the content of something, such as a book.

Thought: der Gedanke or die Überlegung.

True: das Wahre. People will often say “nicht Wahr?” or even just “Wahr” to say “isn’t it true?” or “isn’t it so?”

Unhappy: traurig or unglücklich.

Way: der Weg, but if you’re talking about a way of life, die Art. Lebensart is the art of living, and if you want to add a “by the way” to a sentence, you say “übrigens.” In this way is “auf diese Art” and “by way of” is “auf dem Wege.”

I have found all of these words indispensable. If you use the dictionary I recommended in an earlier chapter to discover these words and learn them, you will find a number of related words. Keep filling your palaces in this way. Words connect to words and the best way to see the connections is to store the words in your mind. It’s great to learn little phrases as well, because the more you learn, the more you realize that individual words are often used only in the context of certain phrases. “Way” is a good example of how a word can be used multiple times in what are essentially fixed phrases.

Please compound your study of these words with reading, audiobooks, movies and music. You will progress so much faster if you hear and read these words used in context. Just 45 minutes a day, regularly adhered to (keeping planned procrastination in mind), will advance your learning tremendously.

Keep in mind too the principle of deliberate practice. It is well known that if we break tasks down to their essential components, we learn the whole task much faster and with greater integrity. Do the basic memory work first, then build the palaces and then fill them with words. One step at a time.

## Conclusion (With an Important Note on Relaxation)

Let me offer two final tips in conclusion:

First, the next time you are out for a walk or just moving through your own home, pay attention to the hundreds of locations that you are already intimately familiar with and think about how these can serve as locations for the various things you might want to memorize, be it the words in a language like German, lines of poetry, important facts, dates, you name it. The more you work on developing this skill, the more you'll discover just how powerful your mind is. And remember, the more you know, the more you *can* know.

Second, relax while you work on your memory. The best way to get yourself into a state of relaxation is to focus on breathing and muscle relaxation.

Here are two strategies that I use:

- 1) Pendulum breathing. To practice pendulum breathing, let your lungs fill normally, hold your breath for less than a second, and then take one last sip of air. Let the breath out naturally, and when your lungs feel empty, push out one last bit of air before breathing in. Circulate the air in this way repeatedly so that you are literally “swinging” your breath like a pendulum. This practice is not only good for putting yourself in an ideal state for working on memorization, it's a great technique for reducing stress in your life overall.
- 2) Progressive muscle relaxation. This technique is much better known than pendulum breathing. To practice, sit or lie down. Focus first on your feet. Point your toes towards the wall, and then up towards the ceiling. Next, flex and release the muscles in your calves, your thighs, buttocks, stomach, hands, forearms, upper arms, shoulders, cheeks and so forth. Co-ordinate this practice with pendulum breathing and you will feel so relaxed that the memory techniques will work almost without effort. And the German language will simply slip into your mind as you practice.

Once you have found a state of relaxation (assuming you have all of your alphabet locations set up in advance, the key is to make sure that you use your palaces mentally without too much (or even any) writing down of the words you want to remember. The only time to write down the text is to test the memorization. For instance, I often write down the words I have memorized in isolation and then check through them later. I am often – almost always – 100% accurate in my recall.

Please curb the temptation to memorize German vocabulary by rote. It is all too easy to begin doing this even without noticing it and then blame the memory technique. This is what so many people do and then claim the techniques don't work. They do work, so long as you build the imagery/associations and journey in each individual palace for each letter of the alphabet and have faith in your mind's ability to recreate the vocabulary you want to memorize based on a true attempt. Your mind naturally makes the associations for you when you use the principles, so limit the interference of the ego mind as much as possible. It is like rowing a boat. The oars must be in the water and you must pull them back if you want to go forward. That might not be the right metaphor for you, but I hope it gives a sense of how to treat your memorization attempts like a kind of operation that you repeat with very little variation or change: look at what you want to memorize, know where it goes on the journey through your palace, allow your mind to naturally supply the imagery based on the idea if making it large/loud/colorful and active, test and then repeat using the next location.

Again, all of this goes very easily if you can make sure that you are relaxed while working.

One final tip that works wonders for people trying to memorize information using these techniques: as soon as possible, tell someone else what you've learned and how it is working for you. Share your difficulties as well. You will learn faster by taking a few opportunities to explain/teach the method.

Have fun with the techniques described in this book and feel free to let me know how you do. If you develop some of your own tips, let me know and I'll include them in this e-book the next time I revise it and give you credit for the contribution.

## Further Resources for Fueling Your German Vocabulary

I want to leave you with a modest list of resources that will help you on your quest to learn and memorize German.

### *Books*

Langenscheidt Power Wörterbuch Deutsch. Highly recommended.  
<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/langenscheidt>

### *Audio*

Michael Thomas Method for German can be found here:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/Michaelthomas>

I become so interested in Michael Thomas and his method that I tracked down a book called *The Future of Learning: Freeing Minds One Person at a Time*. I recommend it highly:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/Futureoflearning>

Pimsleur German is a high-ticket item, but worth every penny, especially if you learn well by audio. Combine this with your Memory Palace efforts and you will be soaring even sooner than by just sitting alone with a dictionary. The trick, however, is to imagine which *other* words you could be using in the sentences they teach you. Constantly expand on the phrases with the words that you've learned for best results.

Here's the link:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/PimsleurGerman1>

If you're already quite advanced, Pimsleur German Plus may be the better option for you:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/PimsleurGermanPlus>

I absolutely adore Ulrich Flemming's *Wild Things in the German Language: They Only Exist in the Dictionary*. The images are witty, funny and very

memorable:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/wildthingsintheenglishlanguage>

### *Movies*

Believe it or not, watching Shakespeare movies in English with the German subtitles turned on helped me a great deal when learning German. The reason is that some German translations of Shakespeare radically simplify the text. If you have a hard time paying attention to two languages at once, you can turn down the volume and simply read the subtitles (untertitel).

Of course, you can watch German films as well and turn on the German closed-caption feature of the DVD to help you learn. Unfortunately, some closed-captioning features on DVDs change the words. I'm not sure why, but this can be frustrating. At the same time, you are still getting a visual presentation of German vocabulary words running in real time in connection with a story unfolding on the screen, so they can still be a valuable resource.

### *Web*

The Internet is loaded with resources. I recommend going with the program I started with at that church in New York City. The program is now freely available on the Deutsche Welle website. Here is the link:

<http://www.dw.de/dw/0,,2548,00.html>

You can also visit Deutsch Interaktiv at <http://www.dw.de/learn-german/deutsch-interaktiv/s-9572>

More specifically, Deutsch Interaktive has an Audiotrainer here:

<http://www.dw.de/deutsch-lernen/audiotrainer/s-3657>

Finally, Deutsch Interaktive has *Warum Nicht?* which is the program I first encountered in that Manhattan church where I learned virtually nothing because I did not have a memory strategy in place. Here's the link:

<http://www.dw.de/learn-german/deutsch-warum-nicht/s-2548>

Even though I've memorized nearly every word they send, <http://www.german-flashcards.com/> is a great daily resource that you will want to sign up for. It's entirely free.

You can also visit [www.memorizegermanvocabulary.com](http://www.memorizegermanvocabulary.com) and follow along as I blog about memorizing new German vocabulary words. There will also be interviews with language experts and people with interesting insights about Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

### *Music*

Pick music that is catchy and repetitive. I have eclectic tastes, so will mention only two songs that I have particularly enjoyed learning German vocabulary from here. They are:

*Ohne Dich* by Rammstein and *Irgendwie, Irgendwo, Irgendwan* by Nena. This entire song was featured in the great 1985 German film *Richy Guitar* and can be seen performed by Nena here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1Jn\\_5Tt47s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1Jn_5Tt47s)

Otherwise, search for these songs on YouTube and use Google to find the lyrics.

### *Visit*

I guess this one is a little obvious, but if you really want to learn German, spend some time in the country (or in Austria or Switzerland). You'll learn a lot more if you take the time to prepare a German memory palace for yourself in advance.

While you're there, see if you can find a Stammtisch of people who meet to talk about your favorite hobby. A Stammtisch is a group of people who meet regularly in a local *kneipe* (bar) to discuss their passions. I have been an amateur magician for many years, so I loved going to meetings where I could hear people speaking German about a topic that is dear to me. Taking this step also helps aid the process of expressing yourself because you have some personal investment in the topic and won't have to think very hard about what it is that you want to say.

## **Further Resources for Memory & Memorization Techniques**

As mentioned earlier I have created Worksheets that go along with this book. In order to receive them, go to:

<http://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/free-magnetic-memory-worksheets/>

Beyond that, I've mentioned Harry Lorayne several times in this book, so let's start with him. The Memory Book: The Classic Guide to Improving Your Memory at Work, at School and at Play is a wonderful resource. Get it here:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/harrylorayne>

Lorayne's website is also well worth visiting:

<http://www.harrylorayne.com/>

If you'd like to hear a nearly 2 hour long interview with the man himself, check out You're Only an "Aha!" Moment from Greatness on this website:

[http://www.hardtofindseminars.com/Harry\\_Lorayne\\_Interview.htm](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com/Harry_Lorayne_Interview.htm)

You'll also want to read Tony Buzan. I recommend Use Your Perfect Memory .

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/tonybuzan>

A recent memory book that has gotten everyone talking is Joshua Foer's Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything has an appearance by Tony Buzan that is a delight to read. His success with memorization skills is absolutely stunning. Here's the link:

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/moonwalking>

Perhaps my favorite audio program is Dominic O'Brien's Quantum Memory Power: Learn to Improve Your Memory . He reads the book himself, making it a wonderful experience. His passion for memorization techniques really shines through.

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/quantummemorypower>



You've probably seen Kevin Trudeau hawking his products on late night television infomercials. Don't groan, however. His Mega Memory is one of the best memory products I've ever encountered. He talks a lot, but in Mega Memory , everything he promises is right there, ready to be learned.

<http://memorizegermanvocabulary.com/megamemory>

From the world of magicians and mentalists, I recommend Richard Osterlind's Easy to Master Mental Miracles .

<http://www.mymagic.com/dvd/dvd-osterlind.htm>

This book includes tons of other ideas as well that will have you amazing your friends.

Tricks of the Mind is Derren Brown's third book. It includes a very powerful chapter on memorization that will take you further on your journey as a memory artist:

[HTTP://MEMORIZEGERMANVOCABULARY.COM/DERREN](http://MEMORIZEGERMANVOCABULARY.COM/DERREN)

## **About the Author**

Anthony Metivier holds a BA and MA in English Literature from York University, an MA in Media & Communications from the European Graduate School and a PhD in Humanities, also from York. The author of numerous scholarly articles and literature, he has taught Film and Literature studies in Canada, the United States and Germany. He is in love with Germany and its language and is currently memorizing all of Bach's compositions for the cello. Currently on hiatus while teaching in Canada, he plays bass with the Berlin metal band *The Outside*. Visit [www.the-outside.net](http://www.the-outside.net) today.

## **Spread the word!**

Do you like this book? Has it helped you to memorize German vocabulary with tangible results? If so, I want to ask you to help me tell other people about it.

Since 2007 I've made my living entirely by writing and teaching. Yet, I have done very little promotion for my books (though this is currently changing). Nearly every sale has come from people passing on the good news through word of mouth. So now I'm asking YOU to please help me spread the word.

Here's how you can help.

If you have an email list of friends and contacts, why not send them a message about this book and its contents?

Discuss the book on web forums and message boards.

Print out a few relevant pages and leave them in any common area where you work or meet with people. You can print your name on the copies so that people know they belong to you and use the material to start great conversations about writing evergreen content.

If you have friends or contacts in the press or media, tell them about this book. They will definitely get a good story, article or feature out of it. I can easily be contacted by emailing: [learnandmemorize@zoho.com](mailto:learnandmemorize@zoho.com).

Write a review of the book and tell people where they can find it.

If you write guest blogs or speak on podcasts, mention how this book has helped you.

Do you teach German as a second language or memorization skills? Maybe this book can be included as part of your course or your next product launch. You could also invite me to be a speaker and have me offer your students individualized coaching while I'm there. Contact me for details.

Thank you.

Anthony Metivier

Coming soon from Anthony Metivier

## **Relax & Remember**

### **12 Secret Keys to Building Effective Memory Palaces That Last Forever**

If you have learned the basics of mnemonics, but still struggle to build Memory Palaces, this incredibly in-depth guide to using the power of relaxation to memorize gives an amazing amount of detail on everything you need to know to overcome the fear and doubt many people have about their memories.

With *Relax and Remember* you will learn:

- How to build Memory Palaces the right way
- How the basics of breathwork improve the intensity of your imagination
- Which Hold and Release exercises EVERYONE serious about memorization must know how and when to use
- How to use the 9 Principles of Systema Breathing to release fear and frustration while memorizing
- How to optimize control over and increase the speed of recall

Plus many more tricks and tips that will make your Memory Palaces beautiful, effective and ... unforgettable!

As a value added bonus, Anthony interviews several memory experts, including World Memory Champions, doctors, psychologists and teachers. You'll learn from some of the most accomplished memory artists of the present day about the relaxation strategies they couldn't live without when memorizing for fun, pleasure and competition.

## SECRET BONUS SECTION

To thank you for reading this book and sticking around during the advertisement section, I want to give you a special bonus. Think of this section like one of those hidden tracks some artists put at the end of their CDs.

When I teach memory skills in a live setting, I haven't got a whole lot of time to impress my students while I'm teaching them the memory techniques discussed in this book. Let's face it: we used to live in an instant on world. Now it's a world of instant downloads. People want the skills I have to offer and they want them immediately.

Here's what I've come up with to create that effect. Within fifteen minutes, I teach them to recite the entire alphabet backwards. It's strange that we cannot do this naturally and equally strange that we need to go to such elaborate lengths in order to train ourselves to do it, but it's worth the effort. Saying the alphabet backwards is the equivalent of skipping rope with your brain. It sends oxygen rich blood to your brain and will wake you up any time you need a kickstarter. And it's healthier than coffee!

Having read this book, you already have the basis for how to do accomplish this feat. There's actually two ways to do it.

Option One: Create a 26 station Memory Palace. Place 26 objects, one per station. The only rule is that each object must start with a letter of the alphabet in reverse order, i.e. zebra, yolk, xylophone, weathervain, etc. As with all memory techniques, the process works best if you create your own words.

Option Two: Create a highly memorable story. This method uses a linking system taught in this book. I didn't teach it because with the exception of using it to memorize the alphabet backwards, I personally don't use it. For more on the linking technique, I recommend reading any of the books mentioned in the resources section.

Here's the story that I use to memorize the alphabet backwards:

Zebbras with Yellow Xylophones ask What to a German man named VUT who is a SR (Senior) with a Question for the Post Office in Northern Minnesota, Lake Kilimanjaro where Jesus asks I (me) about the Human Growth Formula created by the Education Department of the Central Brain Administration.

I use Option One in class to teach my students how to say the alphabet backwards, but I do it in a sneaky way. I *never* tell them that the goal is to say the alphabet backwards. I simply have them first draw a memory palace for themselves with 10 stations. I give them ten words. When they are sufficiently impressed with their ability to recall the first ten words (zebra, yolk, xylophone, etc), I have them repeat the process with a second memory palace.

With another ten words down the hatch and everyone reciting all twenty words with ease, I ask one of the students to recite the words again, but this time saying only the first letter of each word. It rarely dawns on the person speaking what they are achieving, but within seconds, the rest of the class is stunned.

Five minutes later, the students have added six more words and everyone is reciting the alphabet backwards with ease. Try this for yourself. You'll love it!

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Created in Cyberspace

### ***Last Chance!***

I have created Worksheets that go along with this book. In order to receive them, go to:

<http://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/free-magnetic-memory-worksheets/>

As a reader of this book, you'll also receive a *complimentary* volume of the prestigious [Magnetic Memory Newsletter](#) and the chance to subscribe to the newsletter – while it's still free . [Subscribe now](#) and get the only information that will keep your memory ***magnetic*** for years to come.

Looking for more valuable knowledge about memorization techniques for your Kindle?

In Volume One of the Magnetic Memory Mondays Newsletter, you'll learn:

<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Memory-Mondays-Newsletter-ebook/dp/B00C4Y44K2/>

- \* How to use dice to improve your memory.
- \* How to lower any hurdles that may be hindering your progress.
- \* Why you should try to learn each new skill you find difficult at least twice.
- \* How to extend your Memory Palaces to include 3000 words and more.
- \* How to use "Big Box" stores as Memory Palaces.
- \* How to memorize textbooks so you can ace exams.
- \* How to use video games and TV shows as Memory Palaces.
- \* Why perfectionism may be slowing you down.
- \* How to motivate yourself to memorize.



- \* The best time-management techniques for memorization using Memory Palaces.
- \* How to use free email services to memorize new vocabulary.
- \* What to do if you're not a particularly visual person.
- \* The importance of paying attention in the first place.
- \* How to avoid the "Memorization Kryptonite" that may be holding you back.
- \* And much, much more ...

Volume 2 of the Magnetic Memory Newsletter teaches you:

<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Memory-Mondays-Newsletter-ebook/dp/B00CMCSF38/>

- \* How to use variety drills to improve the speed and consistency of your memory.
- \* The 6 negative beliefs you need to eliminate in order to achieve your memorization goals.
- \* Why mistakes are essential for learning and memorizing.
- \* Why one German professor defends memorization techniques for language-learning against the naysayers.
- \* How to combine the Peg System with Memory Palace journeys for maximum memorization effectiveness.
- \* How to create "Palimpsest" Memory Palaces for memorizing more than one language at a time.
- \* Why & how collaborating with a memorization partner can boost your fluency by 100%, 200%, 300% and even more.
- \* How to memorize new vocabulary in context.

- \* Where to find an exclusive - and free - online correspondence club for language learners.
- \* How to use to chart out and utilize larger places such as convention centers as Memory Palaces.
- \* How to memorize names the fast and easy way.
- \* Why building trust with your own memory is key to success (and precise instructions on how to do it).
- \* How to identify and use the "frames of fluency" as you effortlessly memorize vocabulary and terminology.
- \* Why there is no such thing as "memory tricks."
- \* Why one author claims that memorization techniques simply do not work and an assessment of his alternative approach.
- \* How to incorporate physical movement into your memorization procedures.
- \* Why the most effective memorizers always teach what they know about Memory Palaces and other mnemonic techniques.
- \* How to avoid Memory Palace Agoraphobia.

- \* How Queen Elizabeth memorized the vocabulary of 5 languages with step-by-step instructions on how you can do it too.

- \* How to crack the grammar code of any language using memorization techniques.

- \* And much, much more ...

If that ain't enough for you, check out Volume 3:

<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Memory-Mondays-Newsletter-ebook/dp/B00D5DYGAE/>

It will show you:

- \* A FREE resource for finding over 15,000 phrases you can stuff into your Magnetic Memory Palaces
- \* How Zeno's Paradox Relates to Memorization techniques
- \* How to Use Super Heroes as Memory Palaces
- \* Why Rote Learning May in Fact Be Easier than Mnemonics
- \* How to Keep Dr. Forget At Bay
- \* How to Build Confidence When Speaking a the Vocabulary of a Second Language You've Memorized
- \* How to Easily Memorize Spellings
- \* The Right Way to Memorize By Rote (If You're Going to Insist On Using Rote Learning)
- \* Why Memorization Is An Act of "Unhiding"

- \* How to Use the Ultimate Memorization Equation
- \* How to Move Buildings Around in Your Memory Palace Array
- \* Why Spaced Repetition Software May Do You More Harm Than Good
- \* How to Memorize More Than One Language At Once
- \* How to Memorize Like Sherlock Holmes
- \* ... and much, much more.

And then there's always Volume 4 if you want to find out:

<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Memory-Mondays-Newsletter-ebook/dp/B00DQR2S36/>

- \* How to build Memory Palaces that work like roller-coasters (i.e. automatic, thrilling and fun!)
- \* Why speed reading may be the ultimate enemy of memorization
- \* How to use the secrets of "Bibliomancy" to learn and memorize
- \* The power of vocalization for memorization
- \* How to shoot for the moon with your memorization efforts
- \* The key steps to memorizing systematically
- \* How to focus on improving your memory the right way
- \* Compounding your associative imagery
- \* Why meditation will solve just about any memorization problem - fast!
- \* The most important words memorizers around the

world want to store in their Memory Palaces forever

- \* Why having a bad memory and practicing memorization badly are not the same thing
- \* How memorizing a deck of cards can be used to heal patients
- \* The real secrets behind memorization wizardry
- \* The "permission-based" memorization technique that will send your memory soaring
- \* How to overcome learning disabilities and other imaginary barriers
- \* How to memorize sheet music and/or tablature
- \* The power of memorizing foreign language palindromes
- \* ... and much, much more.



And I would be remiss if I didn't introduce you to  
Volume 5:

<http://www.amazon.com/Magnetic-Memory-Mondays-Newsletter-ebook/dp/B00EAB3U2A>

You'll learn:

- \* The truth and lies about how to memorize concepts (with practical examples).
- \* Why rehearsing memorized material backwards is one of the most powerful memorization techniques in the world.
- \* How to use TV and Movies to create effective Memory Palaces.
- \* The secret relationship between Batman and memory techniques.
- \* How to overcome the "Seven Deadly Sins" of memory.
- \* Why "3D" Memory Palaces betray the power of your mind.
- \* How to tell the future with memorization techniques.

- \* How to avoid the dangers of memory "charlatans".
- \* How to deal with personal memories that get in the way of your Memory Palace journeys.
- \* The best ways to read your book from the Magnetic Memory series.
- \* Precisely how memory techniques help fight depression.
- \* How to memorize foreign language cognates and conjunctions.
- \* How memorization multiplies your intelligence.
- \* How to use a GPS navigator to help improve your memory.
- \* 7 ways to be the MacGuyver of memorization.
- \* How to defeat the "willy-nilly" approach to memorization once and for all.
- \* And much, much more ...